Historic Roots
OF
Some Modern Conflicts

Being the Prof. K. Sundararaman Memorial Lecture for 1940 delivered under the auspices of the Kumbakonam Parliament on 14th January, 1940.

BY

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Prof. K. SUNDARARAMAN.

PROF. K. SUNDARARAMAN.

A SKETCH.

Prof. K. Sundararaman was of a rare type. His was a life dedicated to learning and the pursuit and practice of ideals. A teacher by profession, he lived a student all his days. By conviction a Sanatanist, he was nonetheless a social reformer. To him what was not human was not Godly, what was not liberal was not religion. He taught thousands, inspired many and impressed all. He was simple as a child, sincere as a saint and profound as a scholar. His name was a by-word for culture and his words for scholarship. He lived long and lived to great purpose.

Born in 1854 of an orthodox family which had migrated from Conjeevaram to the Tanjore district, Prof. Sundararaman studied at the Kumbakonam College. Graduating therefrom in 1874, he took up service as a teacher in His Higness the Raja of Cochin's High School at Ernakulam the same year. Entering the Madras Educational Service the next year, he went over to Tellicherry and it was while there that he qualified by private study for the Master of Arts degree in History. This enabled him to go over to the Kumbakonam College as Assistant Lecturer. Later on, he was tutor to Prince Marthanda Varma of Travancore, his services having been lent by government for that purpose. He came back to Kumbakonam College after completion of his special work and continued there till his retirement in 1907. In 1909, however, in response to friendly pressure, he took over the Principalship of the Hindu College, Tinnevelly, for a year and helped the college to

tide over a crisis which threatened its destinies. Coming back, he settled in Kumbakonam where he remained till his death.

The lives of educationists and literary men are seldom spectacular or eventful. But their influence on their fellowmen is often more enduring than that of those eminent in other walks of life. And so was Prof. Sundararaman. Both as a teacher and as a writer, he exerted an influence over his pupils and the society around which made his name ring in every contemporary ear and his memory outlive him.

His writings were scholarly, realistic and analytical. They were marked by breadth of outlook and virility and made his readers easy converts to his viewpoint. His literary and journalistic ventures were many and varied. A lover of the old and a close student of history, he had profound faith in the Hindu Shastras. His powerful pen he utilised to repel the many wilful attacks on ancient Hindu religion which its traducers often indulged in. For full three years, he delivered his message to the rising generation through the columns of the "Vedanta Kesari". His contributions to other periodicals were frequent and many and some of them have been collected into two books named "Four Political Essays" and "Hindu Message", not to mention the many treatises and pamphlets he has published. Prof. Sundararaman's journalistic association with "The Hindu" began as early as 1882 when the journal was being edited by the late Mr. G. Subramania Aiyar. From that time right up to 1909, he was a regular contributor to "The Hindu". His articles therein were highly valued and appreciated. After 1909, his contributions were

few and far between, since he wished to concentrate his energies on the mastery of the Sanskrit language and the unravelling of the great thoughts, imbedded in Hindu philosophical and spiritual works. Philosophy he had studied and taught. Sanskrit he learned late and used his learning to modernise the neglected Hindu philosophical doctrines. This study opened up before him a vista of renascent India and turned him into an ardent Sanatanist and led him to strive for the promotion and spread of the Hindu systems of philosophical thought and the Adwaita system in particular. As Secretary of the Kumbakonam Adwaita Sabha, his work was exemplary.

But continual study of the Vedas and other sacred literature convinced him of the many encrustations that had gathered around pure Hindu religion and he was seething with discontent against the many practices that had come into vogue in the name of religion. He studied historically the present ordering of Hindu society and its division into castes and the original Vedas in close juxtaposition and came to the conclusion that many of the taboos which were current under the so-called sanction of religion had really no religious sanction or basis whatsoever. The movement in India for the emancipation of Harijans touched a sympathetic chord in his heart and his intellectual honesty drove him to speak out his mind that the exclusion of Harijans from Hindu temples and their segregation from society were unjustifiable both from the Vedic and moral grounds. This was an eye-opener to many in the province who fancied that the professor was a bigoted Sanatanist who would never break the cake of custom. Even Mahatma Gandhi felt overjoyed at the Professor's lead and commended his noble example to the other Sanatanists in the land.

Prof. Sundararaman was a good Samaritan. His heart went out to the low and the suffering and there was no worthy cause which he did not actively support and generously donate for. In Prof. Sundararaman we had a great scholar and savant and a great man who made his impress on the earlier generation in his own unique way. With him has disappeared the last of those privileged few in India who had the distinction of attending the first session of the great Indian National Congress and of taking part therein.



T. R. VENKATRAMA SASTRI.

HISTORIC ROOTS
OF
SOME MODERN PROBLEMS

I feel greatly honoured by your invitation to deliver the Professor Sundararaman Memorial Lecture. Public lectures in commemoration of the illustrious dead are a commendable institution. They serve a double purpose—honouring the dead and instructing the living. You have recently had two lectures by two of our prominent men, in memory of two of your citizens no longer with us. Both lectures were on political topics. Mine is in intention, and in the main, also political. If I stray into spheres other than political, I hope I shall still hold your attention. I believe I should have interested and roused Professor Sundararaman, but I dare not say that he would have approved of my views in every respect.

Professor Sundararaman was, as you know, deeply interested in our religion. He was at least as much interested in religion as in politics. The stress came to be more on religion than on politics in the later years of his life. Some of you present here may have known him intimately. I myself cannot claim intimacy. He

was not in the Kumbakonam College when I joined it in 1890 about fifty years ago. He was then at Trivandrum as tutor to the Prince. He returned one or two years later, when I was still in the College. Before he went to Trivandrum, he was reputed to be a reformer. Among those present here, there must be some who know at first hand that he favoured widow remarriage and other reforms that then exercised the minds of educated men. When I was in the Mayavaram Municipal High School, in the late eighties, there was agitation for the admission into the Hindu fold of Akhilandaiya's children born in Europe (or taken to Europe as infants) and for the performance of their Upanayana and Marriage ceremonies in the orthodox Hindu form. The staff of the Kumbakonam College, with the revered Sadhu Seshaiya at their head, favoured the reform, while other men of light and leading in this town led the orthodox opposition. Professor Sundararaman was among the reformers. I vividly recollect a meeting at Mayuranatha Swami Temple at which the question of admission was debated, Satakopachariar, the Sanskrit Pandit of the Town High School speaking for, and Ramachandra Sastrigal of Tiruvisalur speaking against, the reform. Professor Sundararaman intervened to object to a second speech in favour of orthodoxy. When he came back from Trivandrum, he came back a changed man. He had met Swami Vivekananda in the

west coast. The slumbering orthodoxy in him awoke, and for the rest of his life he studied Hindu scriptures in the original and in translation and became deeply and sincerely attached to orthodox ways of life. When in the last years of his life the Travancore Government issued the Temple Entry Proclamation, he gave it his blessing, much to the dissatisfaction of his orthodox associates. They went so far as to suggest that he had deserted the standard of orthodoxy in order to support the action of his relation, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar. I have reason to think that it is not correct. But if there was some bias because of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar it is nothing extraordinary, nor should I think it a fault, or a peculiar fault. I should only reflect that affection sometimes saves us from the extreme rigour of our thoughts. I should also add that we are all in the same case. We all struggle between our accustomed ways of life and new ideas which in odd moments we deem to be more just and conformable to reason. None of us can claim unswerving consistency in our conduct, or even in our thoughts. Professor Sundararaman's struggles have been, and will be, those of many another honest and sincere thinker of the problems that confront us in our life's journey in these times.

II

I am not unmindful of the fact that I am speaking at Kumbakonam, a centre of Brahmin orthodoxy, and within hearing of our venerable Acharya, the spiritual descendant of the Adi Sankara, and the inheritor of a great and ancient tradition. The first thing that I should like to do in such a place is to remind you that the Indians are not all Hindus and have not been all Hindus for a thousand five hundred years at the least, and that the Brahmin Community is not the whole of the Hindu community and cannot today claim unquestioned authority to represent it. In days long since gone, the religion to which the name Hinduism is now given covered all Indians. There was no rival yet in the field and therefore no need for a name. Hinduism, for that reason in part, was not a religion in the sense in which we now understand it. To this day Hinduism is not a religion in the ordinary sense. It is a quest of truth and a way of life. So has it been said†, and it seems to me, justly. It is a philosophy, and a religion in a sense, as well.

India has been the meeting ground of many races. The pre-historic period has not been figured out with any certainty or finality. The recent excavations at Mohenjodaro have disturbed

† By Sir Charles Eliot in "Hinduism and Buddhism"-among others

conclusions deemed fairly settled. The assumption that the Aryan entered the country as a conqueror over a primitive uncivilised people will require re-examination and perhaps qualification. That the pre-Aryans themselves came upon a more primitive population in the country seems fairly accepted, and the terms, Adi-Dravida, Adi-Andhra and Adi-Karnataka, now very much in vogue, indicate its unquestioned acceptance. In addition to these three ancient layers of the population, there have been, within the historic period, the the Persians, the Greeks, the Scythians, the Huns, the Chinese and the Tartars and many other non-descript adventurous hordes, making their incursions into the country. Among foreign creeds, we have had Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism. Even before these historic incursions, the Indian mind was largely exercised over the unity vaguely discernible in the midst of the widest diversity all around. It was diversity in the phenomena of Nature that largely engaged their attention. Even in the Rigvedic period, the idea had been reached that the Truth was ONE, though the wise called it by many names. The diversity of peoples and races might have had a share in the impulse for the search for unity. It certainly had a share in the unification of the Indian peoples under the sway of one common dharma. Every one was free to think of the problems of life and reach and expound his own solution. Beliefs of the most

varied character were not deemed in any way to divide the population. All were Hindus, whatever their belief as to the ultimate reality. Hinduism includes the dualist, the non-dualist, the Smarta, the Vaishnava, the Saiva and every other variety of thought that has appeared in the land. It was only after the advent of Christianity and Islam that a man passed out of Hinduism by accepting either of those religions. The Parsi and the Jew who do not proselytise stand outside, but the rest of the population, notwithstanding an almost endless variety, was subsumed under the designation Hindu.

It is then right to mark and note that Christianity and Islam converted a part of the population and that that part ceased to be, or to be counted as, Hindu thereafter. Wide as the Hindu universe was, and tolerant of diversities, these converts passed out of its orbit into a wholly new way of life. It is worth adding that it must remain a matter of doubt whether Hinduism put them outside the pale, or they preferred to consider themselves as having passed out of its pale. ¶ It is the way of life rather than beliefs that mattered to the Hindu. Hinduism has, within its pale, sects entertaining views similar to those of Christianity and Islam without any thought of disowning them at any time.

¶ The converters took steps to make admission of the converts into Hindu Society impossible.

Within the Hindu fold we have had Buddhism and Jainism, both pre-Christian and purely indigenous growths. It is highly doubtful whether either group was counted as in any way dividing the population like Islam or Christianity. On the other hand it is fairly certain that an individual's acceptance of the tenets of Buddhism or Jainism did not interfere with his social relations with the Hindus around. Modern writers have created the separation, though there is legislative recognition of their undivided kinship. Since the advent of Islam, we have the Sikhs and the Kabirpanthis on the one side selecting features of Islam for adoption and forming a sort of Hindu-Islamic sects, and the Arya-Samaj ¶ on on the other, a resistent reaction adopting proselytisation and devoted to winning back converted Hindus. As a result of Christian contact, we have Brahmoism aspiring to purify Hinduism by shedding all mediæval books and the complicated system of ceremonials and retaining the Upanishads only, — a newer dispensation of the same body which was eclectic and took over elements from Christianity, — and the Ramakrishna Mission which accepted missionary activities and the gospel of service and one may add, the Theosophical Society attempting a reconciliation of all religions.

¶ The resistance is recent and modern and not a reaction to Islam when it first came to India.

These groups remained more or less in sympathy with the Hindu population around. Inherent in the temper of the earliest teachers of the vast Hindu population, and the temper of the whole population in consequence, is a tolerance of diverse beliefs and diverse ways of life which has struck foreign observers as a remarkable feature so different from the intolerance of the monotheistic proselytising religions of the west.

Christianity and Islam may therefore be taken as the first disturbers of our sense of unity unaffected by the diversity of races or beliefs or modes of life. Within the fold of Hinduism itself, neither the existing, nor the newly arising, forms or modes disturbed the Hiudu sense of unity, because of the normal temper of the people to tolerate all differences of view. That all worship, in whatever name offered, reached the ONE God is among the daily repeated creeds of the Hindu. ¶

¶ Akasat patitam toyam yatha gacchati sagaram
Sarvadevanamaskarah Kesavam pratigacchati.

III

Here may be mentioned a very recent feature of South Indian life — the animosity of the non-Brahmin to the Brahmin, which in more recent language should be described as that of the Dravidian to the Aryan. The two descriptions, the Brahmin - Non-Brahmin, and Dravidian - Aryan, are not the same. The term Aryan will include not only the Brahmin but also the Kshatriya and the Vaisya. But in the absence of any section conscious of being, and actively claiming to be, Kshatriya or Vaisya, they may be considered to be practically identical. I suppose the latter words have been chosen apparently to give the cry a historical basis and flavour. It does not matter which words are used. The cry is spurious and does not represent any reality except in the hearts of a few of the politically minded.

The Aryans had a religion, not the same as Hinduism. Many writers give the name of Brahminism to the religion of the Vedic Aryan. Hinduism is the name given to the religion of diverse peoples who became welded into one united people. Just now, when Madras is raising a Dravidian--Aryan controversy, research is being directed to the question of how they came to be a united people. Probably

most South Indian Brahmins believe themselves to be "Aryan" in race. They are attached to Sanskrit and the ancient Aryan culture and religion which has become part of the composite religion named Hinduism. They do not feel called on to abjure it. They are aware that a small section of non-Brahmins make a grievance of it. These talk of Tamil culture and of Dravidian culture as distinguishable from Sanskrit culture. It is possible that they have not heard of the claim that has been made that the Atharva Veda, the Puranas and the Upanishads and even the Varnasrama Dharma were the non-Aryan contribution to the body of common heritage known as Hinduism. † The caste system used to be considered a Brahmin-invented and Brahmin-perfected institution. More recent thought challenges the correctness of this view. I do not say that the challenging thesis is satisfactorily proved, but I do think that there is evidence that requires examination. It requires the attention of scholars without any anti-Aryan or pro-Aryan bias.

Were not the Vedas only three at first?

Was not the Atharva admitted to a fourth place only later, just as the Mahabharata or the

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Note: There is no Aryan race.

† Absurd as it may seem, the claim has been put forward that the *Nanmarai*, four Vedas of the Tamil Literature, is not the Sanskrit Vedas but Vedas in Tamil which the Brahmins have destroyed after borrowing from them for building up their Vedas.

Puranas came to be known as the fifth, though a fifth veda is not so readily allowed in popular tradition, being a comparatively late claim?:

Do not the Puranas take an indecisive place among our books, though they advance the claim that the Vedas cannot be unlocked without their assistance?:

Where were the three highest deities of the Hindu Pantheon, when the Vedic Gods dominated the scene with Indra at their head?:

When did the Indian Trinity emerge, first as one of the Vasus, Rudras and Adityas, and afterwards as independent potentates?:

Why are the Upanishads conceded to be of Kshatriya origin, and for long exclusively their possession, while the three-fold Vedas, the sacrificial system and other ceremonials were allowed to be the Brahmins'?:

Is not the Varnasrama Dharma of a later time an institution of the combined Aryo-Dravidian people?:

These are questions that will have to be answered. It may further have to be considered whether the Aryan varna was functional, unlike the present caste by birth, which it became in

surroundings which had already a system of rigid castes. Mr. N. N. Ghose who discusses some of these questions with deep conviction is not a Brahmin and has no partiality for him. He cites a remarkable passage from the Rigveda which, if it supports the interpretation put on it by the writer, shows how early are the beginnings of the combined life of the Aryans and pre-Aryans who are sought to be divided for petty political purposes here in the south.

Samgacchadhvam samvadadhvam
sam vo manamsi · janatam
Deva bhagam yatha Purve
Samjanana upasate

Samano mantrah samitih samani
samanam manah saha saha cittam esham
samanam mantram abhimantraye vah
samanena vo havisha juhomi

Samani va akutih
Samana hrdayani vah
samanam astu vo mano
yatha vah susahasati *

Translation:

Meet together and talk together
May your minds apprehend alike,
Even as the ancient gods accepted
Their portion of the sacrifice.

Common be the prayer of these,
Common be their acquirement,

* Last three verses of the Rig Veda

Common be the purpose,
And associated be the desire.

I repeat for you a common prayer;
I offer for you with a common oblation.

Common be your intention
Common be the wishes of your hearts
Common be your thoughts
So that there may be complete union
among you.

If this passage was not the prayer of a diverse people aspiring to unity, it deserves to be adopted as their prayer today.

Tamil literature bears ample proofs of friendship and hospitality to the ideas which are found in Sanskrit and which, for aught one knows, may be a contribution of the non-Aryan to the common stock of ideas. Very rarely does one come across anything that savours of more than a generous rivalry. It is wholly against the temper of the Hindu to decline light from any source. One can understand objection to another disturbing one's life, but one cannot understand hatred of another because his belief or mode of life does not tally with one's own.

It has been authoritatively expounded that the Aryans believe in distinctions by birth but that the Dravidians do not. This is not true, first

because we cannot now separate the one from the other and attribute to each a different view so as to contrast the one with the other. In so far as these can now be separated by tracing the ideas to their origins, the opposite is more probably true. It has been said, and with much plausibility, that the Aryan had only class distinctions in every land and it is only in India that he took the caste system and it came from other groups. I will not ask any one to accept it as proved. That may still be for research by specialists. But is it true, through the centuries, or just now, that all the non-Brahmin classes are ready to mix without distinction of birth? It has been claimed that the non-Brahmin Hindu and Christians and Muslims have one culture. Will they agree to mix? The sub-castes among non-Brahmins and among the depressed classes have shown very wide diversities. The only thing that is sought to be made common to them all is this manufactured common hatred of the Brahmin. I am perhaps exaggerating the significance of these temporary aberrations. There is no such hate in the hearts of the general population. That fact is a matter almost of admission in the complaint that the vast body of non-Brahmin voters have preferred seven times as many Brahmins as are entitled to seats in the legislature, in proportion to their strength. That it is a political cry and a spurious cry is clear from the claim that all except the Brahmin have

a common culture.¶ But I feel it necessary to add that the objection to Sanskrit, objection to the Brahmin, and even objection to Hindi on the wrong ground of its being allied to Sanskrit and as an invasion of the South by the North, might slowly grow into a permanent obsession of mind, if it is allowed to run its career unchecked. It is also worth noting that this cry is peculiar to the Tamil land and it is not found in the other Dravidian areas.¶¶

Dravidian and Aryan origins of the Hindu beliefs and institutions may be a good subject for historical research; but as a guide in political controversies of the day, the cry of Dravidian versus Aryan can have nothing but mischievous consequences. It has already had one major consequence—the domination of Justice Party's politics by the exclusion† of the Brahmin as an essential principle. Every day brings evidence that anti-Brahminism is the guiding principle of a group for judging every occurrence important and unimportant. And the virulence of communalism threatens to abolish even the decencies of public life.

¶ It is curious that the Congress represents Hindus to the Muslims and Brahmins to the non-Brahmins, notwithstanding that Brahmins are also among those who complain loudly aganist the Congress.

¶¶ The other Dravidian languages are tolerant of Sanskrit and draw on it very liberally.

† Exclusion is supposed to have been lifted. But it remains, and cannot but remain, so long as the original temper remains.

IV

Another matter within the Hindu fold is the revolt of the Harijans. The term Harijan, first applied to them by Mahatma Gandhi, is not now acceptable to them. They prefer the older terms, Adi-Dravida, Adi-Andhra and Adi-Karnataka. This rejection of a designation intended to raise them is an indication of their present mood and temper. To you assembled here I wish to say that I have no desire to examine their attitude in regard to public questions. The existence of an untouchable class with all it connotes, I do not contemplate with equanimity. That untouchablity as a recognised institution must disappear from our midst is my strong feeling. Let me however add that I do not think the institution to be a sin for which our ancestors should be held responsible. They acted in the best conceptions of their time and with the best of intentions. There was justification for their so acting. That they made no effort to purify and uplift this class might be a fault. But they might well have thought it an almost superhuman if not actually impossible task in the conditions of their time.

I think this a proper occasion for me to say that I have come to recognise justice in Mr. S. Srinivasa Ayyangar's view that religious matters are not fit subject for legislation. It is wise to avoid such legislation. But I do not think that

the attempt to get Temple Entry legislation repealed has any chance of success or that it is wise to pursue that agitation further. (This was written before last night's announcement.)

All this to my mind leads only to one conclusion that the problem is not for the legislature, but for us assembled here and for others like us interested in the right ordering of the affairs of our society. Is it recognised that we are in the midst of forces which will allow us no rest until we have found a stable solution? The idea that Hinduism can rest on things as they are, without any attempt at accommodation or adjustment to the changing conditions of our time, will not do. It is not that we cannot adjust. It is not that we have not adjusted in the past. For a most recent illustration, Tiruchendur objected to the entry of oil-mongers into the temple. Their exclusion was decreed sixty years ago. After half a century, that decision has been upset at the instance of other litigants, but not till it was taken up to the Privy Council. We have at last acquiesced in the decision. We object to many classes entering only on the ground of local custom. To some of them, if they only entered without hesitation, we should probably not think of objecting. Not uncleanness, but custom, excludes many classes. We have converted Vratyas *en masse*. We have given a place to powerful foreigners among the varnas with a suggestion that they

have fallen from the Aryan customs, disciplines and modes of life, almost suggesting that any one can be or become a Hindu by agreeing to come into the Hindu scheme of life. In the North, the influx of races has considerably modified our rigidity in these matters. In the South where we have been comparatively sheltered from outside contact, we have been exclusive and suffered no inconvenience thereby. We now need to reacquire the lost art of adjustment to new conditions. As we look round, some things must be obvious to the most superficial observer. Two centuries of contact with a highly developed, subtly aggressive, and sleeplessly active, civilisation have disturbed our repose. The wider world contact of these last decades, the social upheavals and class conflicts in Europe and the desire of a section of our men and women to emulate and introduce these conflicts in a comparatively peaceful society have carried matters further. The intellectual ferment of the nineteenth century is, in the conditions of these last two decades, developing into an active social conflict. Those institutions which were intended for securing social harmony are now being used as instruments for creating disharmony. We have to count with it, however much we may disapprove and deplore.

V

Now, to turn to another topic with historic roots —— the claim of the Muslim to special treatment. No one clamours for special treatment as the Muslim does. No racial element claims it. Races have blended beyond recognition and none will claim it, unless it be the Europeans. No religious group claims it, not the Parsi, not the Jew, not the Christian. The oppression of minorities is not a cry raised by the Christians. Why does the Muslim alone raise it? Why does not the Christian? Can it be that the Christian does not raise it, because his is the religion of the governing class? Or is it that the Christians, not being as large a majority as the Muslims, are not oppressed by the Congress governments? Oppressors oppress not the powerful and the strong. Moreover the Christians are not passively resting on any assured protection for themselves, but actively favour a nationalist solution and ask for joint electorates and Dominion Status. The conclusion is irresistible that the Muslim cry of oppression cannot stand examination. It remained unformulated for long. When formulated, it turned out to be without substance. As for complaints made against Congress governments, they are made by Brahmins, by non-Brahmins and depressed classes as well as by Muslims. Why then does the Muslim set up a cry of oppression of Muslims? Though the first invitation to hold a Deliverance Day was addressed to

the Muslims, it was finally extended to all classes, making it a matter not of Muslims but of all who were opposed to the Congress governments.

The religion of Islam originated in Arabia about the beginning of the seventh century. Within two centuries it spread westwards up to Spain and eastwards up to China. Its traditions were of conquest and forcible conversion. This latter statement will not be admitted by the Muslim, but it is more or less true. To whatever class these converts belonged, they felt that they had a share in the glory and prestige of the Mussalmans as a conquering race. They urge that political arrangements in a self-governing India must recognise their special position because of the long tradition of Muslim conquest and of the Moghul rule in Delhi till the eighteenth century. We have heard the counter argument that they were not the rulers before the English rule began. Let us assume that they were the rulers. It is difficult to see what claim can be founded on it. It does seem that some of our European friends who will not enter a claim for the Christians go some way to support the Muslim case. If the Muslims were the rulers once, the Christians are the rulers now, and yet the Christians put forward no claim. With pleasure one notes the episcopal appeal to the Christians not to consider what they can get for themselves out of the movement for Indian freedom, but what they can contribute to it. They are not afraid of

Hindu oppression. The attitude of our Indian Christians is one of enlightenment and unselfishness. Far be it from me to deny that there are Muslims taking up the same patriotic attitude. But these do not seem to command as much influence as those who appeal to communal passion or communal exclusiveness. Muslim leaders put the communal interests above the country's interests and seem even to glory in doing so. Apparently Muslims outside India do not appreciate the attitude of the Indian Muslim leaders. They think it wrong of the Indian Muslims to obstruct the emancipation of India. The leaders of the Muslim League are men of intelligence and must know the consequences of what they do. We can only say that friends of Indian freedom feel sad, and unfriends chuckle with more or less concealed satisfaction.

VI

I am not saying that there is no room for dissatisfaction with the Congress governments. I have some dissatisfactions myself. But I must say that they cannot be charged with communalism or with the more specific charge of the oppression of the Muslims. Among those dissatisfied with their administration are Brahmins, non-Brahmins, Depressed classes, Parsis and Muslims. They can truly say that, whatever their faults, it is surely not communalism. Not communities, nor creeds, but interests alone may complain of their measures.

It is not in the direct line of my thoughts today to examine the case against the Congress governments. I am aware there are faults. The temper of these times which is the result of world conditions and world movements, inexperience in the exercise of power, and the large majorities in some Provinces like Madras which might have demoralising consequences even in practised democracies with well-established traditions, may be in part responsible for their faults. Impatience in the pursuit of their laudable objects, an assured belief in their own good intentions and in the rightness of their methods, lack of consideration for others' opinions, at times bordering on disdain and contempt, absence of the desire to pursuade or conciliate or to accommodate or adjust, absence of faith in judicial institutions and in the need for

their independence, and a supreme faith in themselves which deems all democratic checks and safeguards unnecessary in their case, are, in the main, their weaknesses. If it were necessary, all this may be illustrated by reference to specific Congress measures. But I do not think it necessary for my argument to-day. That they have given rise to much dissatisfaction, I will admit. But it seems to me that the Muslims are the only group trying to exploit these errors of Congress governments for narrow communal purposes. A larger vision of the interests of the country, a truer appreciation of the essential position and strength of their own community, and a correct appraisal of the Congress governments' shortcomings, must convince the Muslims that it is not communal safe-guards that they require so much as the organisation of political groups to take a correct view of our needs and work for them for the benefit of all communities, without communal bias of any kind. The Muslims claim that Islam is the most democratic of all religions; and they are a strong community. It is difficult to see why they should ask for more than their due position in the country nor how they can justify it. That the Hindus, or any political organisation as representing them, is out to destroy the religion, or culture, or the customs and manners, or the mode of life, of any group in the land, is a most fanciful apprehension. It is not in the Hindu temper as it has evolved or exhibited itself in the course of Indian history or pre-history.

For you assembled here, I wish to add this. Varna Dharma was a good enough solution of the social conflict in its day. When the Christians and the Muslims and the Parsis came in, the varna solution along old lines was no longer wholly applicable. When the population outside the varna fold increases, the varna solution becomes slowly less and less possible. Birth as a regulator of functions becomes untenable. Whether birth ever invariably regulated the function is more than doubtful. Brahmins have gone into fighting groups. Kshatriyas have turned into paths of peace. Men of all varnas have been rulers of the country from the days of Mahananda and Chandragupta. In truth and in fact it is not that Kshatriyas have ruled, but that whoever rules is a Kshatriya, whether he is a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or a Sudra. In the end there is no substitute for the close and well-knit cooperation of all essential *functions* for the common good. It was the Hindu theory involved in the Varna Dharma. It is the Catholic Christian theory. Both recognise hierarchies, though birth came to occupy a more important role in the Hindu theory though not in Hindu practice. How the functions are to be distributed in a society where hierarchies are blurred or destroyed may be a matter of difficulty. But it must be done somehow if we are to have a stable society or government. That the method is not to pray for the return of varna dharma in its pristine form, as it is found in our books, may be clearly fixed in our minds.

VII

In these three conflicts that have their roots in history, there is much that reason cannot grasp. The Muslim may easily put down my inability to understand to my being a Hindu. The non-Brahmin may put it down to my being a Brahmin. All that I can say is that it seems to me that it is good for the country and all of us that we pass on to real politics in which we shall find much in common and not hark back to ancient historic or pre-historic conflicts and seek to kindle fires that were dead for millennia in a baseless apprehension that political power might pass into the hands of one section of our politicians and for ever remain there. For those who have eyes to see, the evidence that we do not divide on communal lines on legislative and administrative questions is clear and unmistakeable and all around us. It is inexplicable tragedy that the active efforts of sectional politics should be directed to cancelling each other and paralysing the community as a whole.

VIII

The Indian States are another knotty problem we inherit from history. I mention it merely to indicate that I am aware of its existence. I should not like to get into its toils, or intricacies. There are six hundred or more States. Some of them are very small. History is their only justification. How they should be dealt with is a serious problem. Some talk lightly of sweeping away all the States with a wave of the hand. It seems to me neither wise nor practical politics to talk of their abolition. The larger States at any rate cannot be abolished. In the internal politics of the States outside interference is not desirable. It is not in the interests of the States' people, and it is not in the interests of the British Indian constitutional development. The governments of Indian States must not only not stand in the way of the constitutional advance of India but must actively support it.

I wish I could say that, as a British Indian, I am directly concerned with nothing more. But it is in the interests of British Indian politics that I feel obliged to add a few more words. It is not in the interests of the States' people themselves that they should invite outsiders to come and help in their campaigns actively or passively. If popular government of any kind or degree was established in an Indian State, the people will neither ask for

outside guidance, nor brook outside interference. Outside guidance in a political campaign within a State is a hardly satisfactory preparation for the future self-government. And powerful outside intervention will weaken the people, destroy their normal cordial relations with the ruler and produce resentment. If the constitutional development was taken up in the spirit of cooperative effort rather than in a spirit of contention and conflict, it will move smoothly on its way. Once impatience is eliminated on the one side and a spirit of good-will is made obvious on the other, it will pass from the present phase of conflict to a new phase of cooperation. Patience will beget a spirit of good-will and good-will will help to eliminate impatience. The only concern of us outsiders in this matter is that when that phase is reached, British Indians will not be called in and will not intervene. That non-intervention is necessary for the solution of the Indian constitutional problem. The last and the most serious obstacle to a united India achieving Dominion Status will then be out of the way.

IX

These are stray thoughts, disconnected and in compartments. The link that connects them it is not difficult to see. But I should like, if I may, to bind them together by a reflection which I wish you to share with me.

We are one People, notwithstanding that in the course of the changes wrought by time we have come to view ourselves as different in caste and creed. We came out of this sacred soil and shall in due time return to it. The country is greater than all of us, representing as it does, the great community of all the generations, past, present and future,—dead, living and unborn, and made sacred with the memory and the mortal remains, the dust and ashes of those who dreamed, aspired and laboured for the building up of our higher life and our civilisation and culture. Instead of bending all our energies to the pursuit and achievement of the common good of this great community, we are thinking each of his or his section's paltry share of the power that is not yet ours and will never be ours so long as we persist in thinking in sections and in mutual conflict. To me, with my partiality—call it weakness if you will—for the lifting sonorous Sanskrit, particularly the intoned Vedic Sanskrit, so careful of music and so careless of grammar where music is concerned, the prayer of the Rigvedic priest still holds.

To those who dislike the Vedic, or any, Sanskrit, may we not say in English which is, for the moment, the only cementing, if not sacred, language of our country.

Meet together, talk together;
One in thought and purpose,
One in aim and aspiration,
One in all your desires,
So act that there be
Complete union among you.

The Vedic priest leaves himself out in self-effacement and speaks of ***you*** and ***your*** instead of ***we***, ***us*** and ***our***, and merely offers his ministration. To the aspirants for leadership in the sphere of action as much as in the sphere of thought, it is a call to put the thoughts of the country and the community before the interests of individuals and sections.*

Thank you, Gentlemen, for the patient hearing you have given me.

* Or it may be that the Vedic priest exhorts others to unity being sure of his own will to unity.

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